

MISSIONS IN THE TWO AMERICAS

Who would have dreamed fifty years ago that in February, 1916, a representative company of delegates and visitors numbering nearly five hundred would meet on the Pacific side of the Isthmus of Panama, for a great Christian Congress! And yet such was the fact, and so important were the results that their presentation requires a three volume report published in English, Portuguese and Spanish.

The object of the Congress was, first, to ascertain conditions in Latin-America, so far as evangelization and Christianity are concerned; second, to call special attention of those interested in missionary effort to Latin-America; third, to give all possible inspiration toward further evangelization of Latin-American countries.

The sessions of the Congress were followed up by conferences held in various South American states, as well as in Cuba and Porto Rico.

From articles and reports dealing with the Congress we glean further paragraphs that have a bearing upon mission work among Latin-Americans.

"The close of each morning's meet-

ing was devoted to communion and intercession. These services were led by men who dwelt in the very presence of God, and their words and prayers were so searching and so thrilling, that before one knew it, tears were streaming down one's face. Every religious gathering was brought face to face with the God-Father, as the source of all strength and all wisdom, and grace."

"There are nearly eighty million people in these countries, and the greater part of them do not know Christ."

"There is imminent peril to faith among a large part of the people of these countries. The great majority of the fifty thousand students in institutions of higher education belong to this class, and constitute a strong appeal to the Christian churches. In nearly all of these countries, among the educated classes, there is a growing tendency to infidelity, and free thought."

"'Christianity Without the Bible' is a phrase which sums up the situation. It means a Christianity without moral ideals, and a Christianity without Christ. And when Christ is gone, where is salvation?"

The address of welcome delivered by Senor LeFevre, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Panama, showed a warm and generous spirit of welcome. "I have not hesitated," said His Excellency, "to accept your kind invitation and to proffer a warm wel-

come, although I am a sincere and devout Catholic. . . .”

“The black man in our South has made more progress in the last fifty years than Latin-America has made in four centuries.” (Bishop Kinsolving.)

“In Cuzco, the ancient Capital of Peru, is a church near one of the great University halls, on whose wall is an ancient tablet upon which is engraved, ‘Come unto Mary, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’”

“On the Sunday after the close of the Congress, the cornerstone of the fine new concrete depository of the American Bible Society, at the Atlantic end of the Canal, was laid. The Archbishop of Panama said to his people, ‘We must not receive their Bibles, leaflets and tracts. No such can be printed for use without the authority of the church. The Protestant ones are full of errors and should be burned at once.’ But the Bible will find its way to the people, nevertheless.”

“Of the slightly over two and one-half million inhabitants in Cuba, all but twelve per cent. are native Cubans, Spanish-speaking whites or blacks, or mulattoes, and of the remainder all but two per cent. are Spanish immigrants. Less than one per cent. come from the United States, and not more than one per cent. from the rest of the earth. Essentially, therefore, Cuba is as Spanish and almost as Roman Catholic as Spain. There is need of more mission-

aries and more missionary money. Towns of from five hundred to twenty-five hundred people are not yet ministered to by evangelical Christianity. Cuba plus Porto Rico and possibly, also, plus Mexico, is the key to Latin-America evangelization."

"What an awful thing it must be to be God and know all the need of the whole world." (Bishop Shepard.)

"Twenty-one missions were represented at the Congress, and the work was conducted in three languages."

"The gospel for the modern world is the same that won the scholarly Saul of Tarsus, and the slave Onesimus."

"The Congress had confidence enough in the Christian gospel to plant it in the social soul of Latin-America and leave to its own inherent strength and light the task of disposing of whatever error exists in other religious institutions which are neighbor to it."

"If America ever has a word to say that shall be for the peace of the world, it will be when she is Christian through and through from the top of Alaska to the Strait of Magellan." (Rev. Charles L. Thompson, D.D.)

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